

RUFUS B. KELLOGG

KELLOGG DIDN'T LIVE IN GREEN BAY VERY LONG BUT IT WAS LONG ENOUGH TO PERPETUATE HIS NAME IN THE LIBRARY AND THE KELLOGG CITIZENS NATIONAL BANK

HE FELL INTO THE HABIT OF DRIVING HIS BUGGY AROUND THE COUNTRYSIDE TO TALK TO FARMERS AT WORK

I THINK YOU FELLOWS COULD USE BETTER HORSES. THEY'RE SPINDLY!

MR. KELLOGG DID SOMETHING ABOUT THE HORSE PROBLEM. HE BOUGHT A 1000-ACRE FARM IN ALLOUEZ AND STOCKED IT WITH BLOODED FRENCH PERCHERONS FOR BREEDING!

HIS BIG VICTORIAN HOME ON SOUTH MONROE AVENUE IS STILL STANDING AS THE OLDEST PART OF ST. JOSEPH'S ACADEMY.

Belated Tribute

Library Honors Rufus Kellogg

By JACK RUDOLPH
Press-Gazette Staff Writer

On the south wall of the main reading room in the Kellogg Public Library a portrait of a dapper little man with iron grey hair, ruddy complexion and a walrus moustache was hung recently. Quite aside from the artistic merits of the painting — and it's a very fine one — putting it there and identifying it properly was a long overdue tribute to the nearly forgotten man to whom the library owes its existence.

Not that the library has ever been ungrateful or has forgotten Rufus B. Kellogg. The painting, by the once famous "painter of presidents" G.P.A. Healy, has been in the same room for over 30 years but has heretofore been displayed obscurely and without identification.

Rufus Bela Kellogg didn't live in Green Bay very long and his active business career was even shorter, but it was long enough to perpetuate his name in the library and the Kellogg-Citizens National Bank. Less spectacular but once equally important to the agricultural life of the era was his work in drastically improving the breed of farm work horses in Northeastern Wisconsin.

Unlike many of his friends and associates, Kellogg didn't get a street named after him. Kellogg Street on the West Side was named for someone else.

Kellogg came to Green Bay and established the Kellogg National Bank in 1874. He was forced into retirement by high blood pressure in 1882 and died, a victim of apoplexy, in 1891 at the age of 54. He packed a lot of accomplishment into those 17 years.

Graduate of Amherst

He was born in Amherst, Mass., April 15, 1837, and died there while attending a college class reunion. When he graduated in 1858 he was president of his class although one of its youngest members.

An older brother, A. W. Kellogg, had established Oshkosh's first bank in 1852, and after graduation Rufus joined him there to learn the banking business from the ground up. He did, too.

Kellogg, always a careful and natty dresser, delighted in telling of his introduction to the dignified profession of banker. When he reported for work the first morning, toggled out in striped pants, morning coat and flowing cravat his brother handed him a broom and invited him to get cracking on the floor and wooden sidewalk out front.

Started As Messenger

Starting as a bank messenger, Kellogg was an executive by 1873 and highly regarded throughout Wisconsin. That year Henry S. Baird and a number of other prominent men here decided Green Bay needed more than one bank. Kellogg was invited to come and start another.

He accepted and moved to Green Bay early the following year, becoming the first president after purchasing 290 of the first 500 shares issued. He put up a tidy bundle for them at \$150 a share, receiving in return a salary of \$100 a month.

The bank was successful from the start. Kellogg's nominal tenure as president ended in 1882 because of his health, but he continued to run things. It was he who personally gave John Rose Sr. his first job as a messenger in the institution to which Mr. Rose has devoted over 70 years.

Following his semi-retirement, Kellogg found time heavy on his hands and, so the story goes, fell into the habit of driving his buggy around the countryside to talk to farmers at work. Noting the spindly horses most of them were forced to use for lack of better animals he decided to do something about it.

He bought a 1,000-acre farm in Allouez and stocked it with blooded French percherons for breeding. To maintain the quality of his herd, which soon acquired a national reputation, he made annual trips to France to purchase prize animals.

It was on one such trip, in 1885, that he met Healy, then one of the most sought-after artists in Paris, and sat for the portrait now hanging in the library. How the library got the painting is a story in itself.

Library Was Solution

An active and enthusiastic booster of his adopted city, Kellogg wanted to see it develop into something other than a roughneck sawmill and lake port town where culture was in short supply and less demand. His solution was a public library.

Startling as it may seem today, when a public library is considered as much a part of a community's life as its school system, the citizenry were not impressed. After several futile efforts to get the project off the ground, Kellogg got it put up for a referendum vote in 1886, promising a liberal donation if it went through. The proposition was soundly defeated.

Kellogg could have done the job alone but he was convinced that a privately endowed library was not the answer. It needed public funds and support to succeed and grow.

Death a Shock

Although his health was precarious few of his friends seem to have realized it; consequently, his sudden death on Sept. 24, 1891, was a shock. The library board hastily assembled and adopted a long, flowery but obviously sincere tribute to its benefactor. Five years later, in 1896, his name was given to the institution his interest and gifts had founded.

Rufus Kellogg was not a big man but he stood tall in the estimate of those who knew him. Rigidly honest, he insisted upon absolute integrity in any institution that handled other peoples' money, and he lived up to it.

The few who remember him recall that he was a slight, active man, with great dignity but friendly and approachable. A kindly man, he apparently had a fiery temper but kept it under rigid control. Although the effort probably contributed to his hypertension, nobody ever saw him angry.

The city also retains another visible memento of his presence, although it is getting old and few people recognize it for what it once was. His big Victorian home on South Monroe Avenue is still standing as the oldest part of St. Joseph's Academy.